

C. Remarks

The claims are 1-6 with claim 1 being independent. Non-elected claims 8-10 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claim 1 has been amended to clarify the invention. Applicants submit that the amendments made herein are fully supported throughout the application as filed (see, e.g., Figures 5A and 5B and corresponding description); accordingly, no new matter has been added. Reconsideration of the present claims is respectfully requested.

The Examiner required restriction to one of the following allegedly distinct inventions:

- I. Claims 1-6, drawn to a printing apparatus that performs the feature of dividing a printing area into a plurality of regions for printing and has the image data stored in a print buffer, classified in class 358, subclass 502; and
- II. Claims 8-10, drawn to a printer driver that is executable in a host computer that outputs printing data to a printer, classified in class 358, subclass 1.15.

While Applicants previously elected Group I by telephone, Applicants hereby confirm the election of Group I, claims 1-6, and have cancelled the non-elected claims 8-10 without prejudice or disclaimer.

Claims 1-6 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, as allegedly failing to comply with the written description requirement. In addition, claims 1-6 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, as allegedly failing to comply with the enablement requirement. Further, claims 1-6 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112,

second paragraph, as allegedly being indefinite. Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections. Claim 1 has been amended specifically to address the Examiner's §112 concerns; the claim has been amended to clarify a feature wherein the compressed data is input and the decompressed data is written in the print buffer. Applicants respectfully submit that each of the §112 rejections has been overcome in view of the amendment to claim 1 and respectfully request withdrawal of the §112 rejections.

Claims 1 and 5 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being allegedly anticipated by Watanabe (U.S. Patent No. 5,689,289). Claim 2 stands rejected as being allegedly obvious over Watanabe in view of Iwasaki (U.S. Patent No. 6,328,403). Claims 3 and 4 stand rejected as being allegedly obvious over Watanabe in view of Iwasaki and further in view of Clark (U.S. Patent No. 7,265,856). Claim 6 stands rejected as being allegedly obvious over Watanabe in view of Iwasaki and Clark and further in view of Iwasaki '961 (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0175961). Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

One important feature of the invention as presently claimed is the storage of column data corresponding to the divided regions of a predetermined column amount (for example, 32 columns 64 raster, see Figure 7, page 34, line 24 - page 35, line10). In other words, block data (209 or 212) is decompressed to generate data. Raster amount (number) of generated data is 64; bit amount (number) of generated data is 32. Bit amount corresponds to column amount. Moreover, the claimed input means sequentially inputs block data corresponding to the divided regions for printing in one scanning.

The primary cited reference Watanabe discloses that a facsimile unit has a four-line buffer 107, and the printer unit 200 has print buffers 1 and 2. The four-line buffer stores data of a one line amount. However, in Watanabe, decoded data corresponding to data received by the facsimile unit has a length of one line. Print buffers 1 and 2 each have a storage capacity corresponding to a data amount recorded by a single scan. Clearly, Watanabe fails to disclose or suggest the presently claimed feature “a print buffer for storing column data corresponding to the divided regions of a predetermined column amount, a column amount of the column data stored in the print buffer being smaller than a column amount of column data to be printed by one scanning”.

For at least these reasons, it is clear that the presently claimed invention is not anticipated by Watanabe. In addition, because none of the secondarily cited references remedies the basic deficiency of Watanabe, no combination of Watanabe with any of the secondarily cited references renders the present invention obvious. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the §102 and §103 rejections.

This Amendment After Final Rejection is believed clearly to place this application in condition for allowance; at the very least, it reduces the number of pending claims and simplifies the issues for appeal. Its entry is therefore believed proper under 37 C.F.R. §1.116. Accordingly, entry of this Amendment After Final Rejection, as an earnest attempt to advance prosecution, is respectfully requested. Should the Examiner believe that issues remain outstanding, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney in an effort to resolve such issues and advance the case to issue.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our New York office by telephone at (212) 218-2100. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

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